(b) Loans from Nationalised Banks under Differential rate of Interest Scheme.

(c) Allotment of public telephone booths.

(d) Reservation in distribution of petrol pumps, kerosene depots etc.

During the last 3 years, the following physically handicapped persons including blind were placed in Employment by Employment Exchanges;

	Employment provided
1988	5475
1989	3949
1990	3936

Special Recruitment Drive for the Handicapped

Government have launched special recruitment drive in 1987, 1988 and 1990 and approximately 1000 hearing handicapped and visually handicapped persons have been given placement in Central Government Offices, Central Public Undertakings and Banks etc.

The special drive is intended to clear the backlog of vacancies reserved for the handicapped.

Amendment in Divorce Law

3512. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the reports of pathetic plight of women suffering from epilepsy as brought out by the noted commentator and analyst Neelam Mathews in the Hindustan Times of 30th May, 1992;

(b) whether Government are aware that there is a sizable number of women who have been divorced on account of legal provisions to that effect; and

(c) whether the matter will be examined as a social issue and the law on divorce suitably amended?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Committees Boards under the Ministry of Welfare

3513. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the various Committees/Boards at various levels and in the various public sector organisations under the Ministry in which non-official members from the public are nominated or elected to represent various interests;

(b) how many of these Committees/Boards have been constituted and the names and addresses of the members on each of these committees;

(c) what is the present tenure of each of the committees that have been constituted; and

(d) by when the other committees which have not been constituted, are likely to be constituted?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House. (*See* Appendix CLXIV, Annexure No. 57).

Helpage home for the aged persons

3514. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:

SHRI J. S. RAJU:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to open "Helpage" homes for the aged persons; and

(b) whether Government propose to engage these aged persons in some employment?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) A new scheme for setting up of Old Age Homes for destitute and poor aged persons is under formulation in consultation with the Planning Commission. The scheme will be implemented through voluntary organisations.

(b) No, Sir.

Development of Tribals

3515. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a fact finding and need assessment survey of tribals in India was conducted by the Ministry; and

(b) if so, the details of socio-economic measures undertaken as a follow-up measure for the development of the tribals in India?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) and (b) The Ministry has sponsored various fact finding studies/surveys through Governmental and non-Governmental Research Organisations. These studies relate to evaluation of programmes, impact on socio-economic condition, etc. Based on these findings, family benefit schemes under agriculture, horticulture small and village industries, etc.. are implemented in the tribal areas according to the needs of the people. For educational development, residential schools, boys hostels and girls hostels are constructed with special emphasis to increase the literacy level among the Scheduled Tribe population. Low literacy pockets have been identified especially where tribal women literacy is less than 2 percent and accordingly scheme is being formulated to promote education among tribal women. Programmes under health, communication drinking water supply, rural roads under Minimum Needs Programme are implemented in the critical areas where tribals need special attention for their socio-economic development.

Drug abuse problem in youth

3516. SHRI VENOD SHARMA: SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the dimension of the drug abuse problem in the country;

(b) what are the reasons for growing drug abuse problem in youth today;

(c) what are the details of specific steps taken by Government to prevent drug abuse;

(d) the role of SAARC countries in controlling drug menace; and

(e) the programmes/schemes formulated by SAARC countries in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) Ad hoc studies conducted in 31 cities and two border areas indicate that youth between the age of 15—30 are most vulnerable to drug abuse, the studies also indicated that there was no religious, cultural or socio-economic groups unaffected by the problem.

(b) Poor group pressure and curiosity are the most important reasons leading to drug abuse.

(c) The Government has launched a programme of awareness generation to warn the youth about the ill-effects of drug abuse and alcoholism. In addition, voluntary organisations are funded for setting up and running of counselling, de-addiction and after care centres for treatment and rehabilitation of those addicted.

(d) The SAARC countries have all expressed concern over the drug menace in the region and a conven-